

Interview with Nora MacLennan  
By John Byl  
September 26, 1991.

Mary Hamilton came to me and talked about starting a camp. And then she and I went up to Algonquin Park. She wanted to find a site that she considered a good place for a camp and it was also obtainable and we went up. We slept out all night on a rock and she found a place she liked. That was the beginning of Camp Tanamakoon....

I know Flora Musgrave. Is she still living [yes]....

Bess Pitt, oh yes she is a 1925 graduate....

Nothing I would say would mean very much to anyone now. It was such a long time ago that I had anything to do with the school. That would be alright to use this for your dissertation and writing about the school....

I was teaching at Branksome when Mary Hamilton, she had been teaching ahead of me, I became very interested in teen agers. A group of them asked me if I could take them on a camping trip. And I did. And Mary Hamilton was very interested in that. She asked me if I would go with her to Algonquin Park to choose a place for the camp. Which I did. That spot became Camp Tanamakoon.... It is a little more populated now.... I have not anything to do with it for quite a while. Bess Pitt had quite a bit to do with it....

[June 11, 1991, Globe and Mail] Lorna Maclean [Sheard], I don't know if she is still living, I don't know her married name. She could perhaps give you something you might be interested in. I don't know if she lives in Toronto. She lived on Highland Avenue in Toronto. But that was before she was married.

[Did you remember the demonstrations] Oh yes, very well. Marching tactics and folk dancing mostly. I don't think we did much else but folk dancing and marching tactics. Like the army. I think Mary Hamilton had ideas that she could take tactics from the army, and that was what we did. We marched around the hall, left turns... Mildred Marsh, I think she is dead. I am sure she is. She graduated 2 or 3 years before I did.

[Annual luncheon] I did not get to all of them but I remember them. Edith Amsden is still living, or she was last year. I can't tell you where she lives. Fran Gunyun kept in close contact with her, but Fran died last year. I miss Fran very much. We used to talk a lot on the fun. Edith is not married. I think she lives in Toronto, but I have an idea that she is not quite right. [Gertrude Moore] I do not know her very well. She has a lot to do with MES. [Helen Levesconte] She is dead. Her sister Lil is still living. She is in the city, I can't tell you where.

[What do you remember about Mrs. Nasmith.] She was an odd one.



Lady Eaton came very interested in her. She was one of those people who used to recite. Go out reciting. She was very interested in the English language. Lady Eaton became interested in her and opened a school for her to teach in. And then she taught for awhile.... She was an odd ball. I remember she said to us one day. We had a group, and she like us to read poetry and this sort of thing, and I remember one day in the group she said, "You know I am going to be married, he's got an ugly little body, but a pure white soul." He was deformed but he was a very able man. During the war he did a lot to arrange for water purification. She was an odd ball really. It was very important for that her students had a good social background. I think she was all wrong in so many things. She like people whose father was a lawyer or judge or something, and if you did not measure up in those sort of ways she just neglected you, and had nothing to do with you. She was a strange woman. She was happy after she married. For her it was very important to marry. And she thought that married people were much more to be courted than unmarried people. She had very strange values of people. At least I thought so. She had evening classes to teach women about Shakespeare and Browning and I was the secretary. We lived quite close to the school at the time. Our house is now broken down. We lived on Sultan house by Little Vic Rink. Our back garden almost backed up on to MES. I used to be secretary for her night classes. I got to know her quite well. I really didn't think highly of her. A lot of people came to those classes to learn especially about Browning. She was sold on Browning. She used to talk an awful lot about Browning. And she had socially, if you were not in the social group she really was not interested. She got a lot of people who thought it was the thing to do to talk about Browning. She had quite large classes and I was the secretary. She might have a hundred but I would not think any more than that. She taught these courses as well as some of the day classes to the full-time students. There would also be some part-time students taking day classes.

[What was the old building like] It was very interesting. It really was a beautiful old building. A very nice hall. I think there were two if not four rooms for acting, where they got themselves ready. I think there were only two on the back. But there was a very nice interviewing room in the front as you went into the front hall. There were two rooms. One was used as a secretary's place. That is where I went each night. Not every night, I think three nights a week or something. But it was really a beautiful old building. [for PE?] We used the big hall. We moved chairs out of the way. You were somewhat limited but it suited fairly well.

[Mary Hamilton] She was a very fine person. I can't talk about Mary Hamilton, I have forgotten so much. She was very fine. I do not know how Mrs. Nasmith came to know her. [Annesley Hall?] Yes that's right. She was at Branksome Hall and MES but not for too long. MES took over all her time.



I graduated in 1922, that was a long time ago. There were twelve of us that left at the same time. I am the only one left. At least I think so. [L. Chambers] I thinks she is here. She is married. She has passed on as far as I know. [Jean Douglas] She is very interested in Dramatics. She has done a lot of acting. But not much about PE, except for dancing. She is a small very vivid sort of person. [Hazel Frawley] Oh yes Frawley. Where is Frawley. She is married too. I am not sure if she is in the city or not. For a long time I heard from all these people at Christmas but I have not heard from many of these for awhile. [Beatrice Goad] She is dead. [Jane Hinds] She did not do much about the school. She was very irregular in her attendance, and I don't really know why she was there, because she was not very interested in anything. I don't know if she graduated. [Lois Howard] She is a very up and coming person, or was, I think she died last year. [margaret Inglis] Oh yes, she died last year too. She was an awfully nice girl too. A wonderful person. A wonderful sense of humour. [Dorothy Murphy] Dot lives in the west, Victoria or Vancouver, she is married. [Helen Parsons] She died last year two days before Christmas. She was a very up and coming person. Her reason for going to MES was that she was terribly keen about dramatics. And she was in several plays. Then she sort of drifted away from dramatics and into PE. And she taught a little but not very much. She has been very active and also taught at MES. [Francis Pearce] That is one of my best friends. She died last year. She was Francis Gunyon. Fran was a great person. A dandy person. [Kathleen Pepler] K. Pepler. She lives in England. She was a very, she is living in England. [Marain Perry] I never knew what she did. She came from Peterborough, and she is married, but I do not know anything more about her than that. [Dorothy Prat] Dot Prat, wait a minute, she was more interested in dramatics than anything else. She is dead. [Winnifred Prendergast] She did more in gym and lives in London, Ontario. You know a very good friend whom I have known for 50 years. We lived together for almost that long. She and I bought an old farm up near Orangeville and we had a lot of fun up there. Old farm house and so on. And we had, I wrote to all my grad friends from MES and asked them to come up for a day. So we had seven and a had a wonderful time.... I think most of us more or less the same background and similar taste. And almost all of them came from Toronto. And perhaps from the same school. Mostly from private schools. I was Branksome, Fran Gunyon was from BSS and some from Westbourne. Jo Robinson was BSS. She was just physical and wasn't interested in dramatics at all. She is dead. [Lena Sanders] I never knew what happened to her. She was a strange girl. She did not mix well at all. I think she came from Stouffville. I think her background was not similar. And she had none of the friends we had. I always felt that we were not very considerate of her. She was a very likeable person, but hard to get to know. And I think, I would not say the rest of the people disliked her, but they were not a bit interested in her. [Alice Thompson] Oh yes, Alice Whiteney. She was a niece of Sir something or other Whiteney who was the Lt. Gov. Something happened to her and she left. I never knew what happened to her when she left. [Adrienna Williams] She is one of my best friends.



She has an awfully strange life. She married. We both went to a camp. We kept writing to each other. I had a boule at that time and she had a boule. And she used to get a letter every day and I didn't. She married. Gunion. An Englishman. An Engineer. She went to live in Japan. When the war was just in the beginning before it really started. The firm for whom her husband worked realized what was coming and closed up there and went to England. She has so much tragedy in her family. Then she was on the Athena and she had three children and had a baby at it was lost. She could not find it. Almost a year later somebody who had picked the baby up from a dreadnought found the baby and returned the baby. She had an awfully nice brother who went to RMC and when he was on the physical team there. Something happened to one of his fingers and when he came home for Christmas he thought he would go to the hospital and have it straightened and he died on the operating room table. She has had things like that happen to her all her life. She ended up in England. very interested in the school. I think it

When I left MES? When I was there I was very interested in some girls who were doing social work at night. I became interested in that. I could not afford from a money standpoint or time to go to the University and take the social service course but I took almost all the same courses at night, say two a year, and I taught PE at Branksome for six years. And then when I left Branksome I did not do any more teaching, I went to Children's Aid. I was very interested in teen age kids and seemed to get along well with them. I did social work for eight years, more than that.

[Rev. MacLennan] I think he came from the same part of the family as ours was, but we never knew him. He preached in Eaton Memorial. He is related very indirectly.

My dad was lawyer. Canadian born from Port Hope, and Mother from Kingston. I think the met at Queens. I don't know. That is what I always understood and they lived in Toronto all their lives.

[Margaret Eaton] I knew her slightly. I say slightly. I do not know that she visited the school.

[12th Night] They put on a show. Helen Parsons was one of the leading ones. [article, G & M] Jean Douglas was quite a girl. I was not awful keen about Dramatics. I knew that I was no good at dramatics.

[Dora Mavor Moore]. She was wonderful. She was a very leading person, very well known. I did not get to know her very well because I was very much interested in dramatics.

[Piper] I hardly remember that.

I graduated in 1922, June I think.

[MESOLAE] I don't remember that. [Oracle] That does not mean a thing to me. [Yearbooks] No. They may have started them later







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Mr John Byl

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Dear Mr Byl

I am replying to your letter to my wife Kathleen Pepler Hall concerning her attendance at The Margaret Eaton School in Toronto. Kitty is now over ninety and although in good physical health, her memory has suffered sadly over the last few years and is not able to answer your quwsrioneire. I thought it might be of help to you if I wrote, in letter form, what I know of her carieer in teachinmg,.

Kitty was born in Toronto in Feb 1901, her Father was a well known G.P. and they lived at 600 Spadina Ave. Her Mother was the daughter of a well knowne famil  
amed Chadwick.

After attending Glen Mawr School (private) and passing her Matric. and entry to University, she stayed at Toronto University only one year and then decided to move to the Margaret Eaton Sschool, in 1922.

After graduating she took a post in St John N.B. with the Y.W.C.A. Soon after being appointed the first Ph.Ed. Director at the College of Agricolture in Gwelf, Now the U.of Gwelf. In about 1928, wishing to travel, she was sent to Calcutta where she joined the staff of the YWca, during her three years there she wasa employed by the Indiab Government to train the first Ph.Ed, women teachers in that country. A difficut job as the Gov. were not prepared to put up money to train any but those women unlikely to marry!. However she was, aparently, most successful during her time in India.

It was in 1931 when she was taking ship back to Canada that we met, I being an officer in the ship in which she travelled to Japan, We married in East Africa in 1939 where I was then working.

During the years between 1931 -39 she worked, again for the overseas staff of the YW. in Cairo.

After the war we returned to East Africa, returning to to England on retirement in 1965.

During our married life Kitty has always kept up her teaching, wherever we have been, mostly with children but also with adult women classes on occassions.

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To return to MES. Kitty's was a class of twelve and had your enquirey come a few years earlier I could probably have told you all their names as I have met a number of them, now, all that I can remember are:-  
 Lucille Jacob, Andrea Williams, Fran Pearce, Dorothy Pratt. I have a sad feeling that Kitty is possibly the only survivor.

Mary Hamilton, the principal during Kitty's time was a great and lifelong friend. She started Tanamagoon Camp in Algonquin Park, I believe with Kit's assistance, and I think it was quite an offshoot of MES at that time. Kit was a councillor for many years and I have been a guest there myself in Mary's time.

Post Graduate study. Kit studied in Germany with a Dr. Logus in Hamover. Took a course in Country Dance at Cambridge U. And Swedish work somewhere else.

Reason for choosing MES. Her Father thought that physical training might help her overcome a too frequent her fainting attacks.

Unpleasant memories. During Drama classes at times one had to walk onto stage, take out of a bowl on a table a slip of paper on which was written a subject upon which one had then to talk!.

Most pleasant memories. Ballet and Dance.  
 Alumnae.. there was no organised Alumnae as far as I know at that time, but there was a wonderful secretary at the school who for many years kept correspondence with the members, her name sadly eludes me and I believe she also is dead now.

Please excuse errors in this typing, I have very poor sight now and took a course in touch typing but I am no expert. I can only hope that what I have written may be of some use in your research. Kit, I know would be most interested in seeing your paper. We wish you the very best of luck.  
 Yours sincerely

*John Hall*





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